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Slumdog Philosopher, Richdog Philosopher

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Slumdog Philosopher

“The world is truly beautiful solely in the eyes of a true philosopher.” – Kedar Joshi, (a slumdog philosopher), Superultramodern Science and Philosophy

“Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intellect by means of language.”—Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations

Scene: Deccan Dugout, a trendy Restaurant & Bar in Pune, India. Players: a balding middle-aged philosopher (Ram), a spare, young philosopher (Kedar), and a stocky waiter (the waiter keeps bringing them beers from time to time).

Ram: Why do you call yourself a slumdog philosopher? I take it it's a reference to the movie.

Kedar: Yes, have you seen it?

Ram: Well after all the Oscars, it's almost obligatory for any Indian—but no I haven't seen it, not all at any rate.

Kedar: Did you see enough to get the basic story?

Ram: Yeah, that's when I stopped watching. I mean isn't it preposterous that a quiz show contestant just happens to get asked the questions he's been exposed to in the course of his life?

Kedar: Isn't that the story of every winner? They all get asked just the right questions, the questions whose answers they've been exposed to.

Ram: Very clever—but you know what I mean. Given the glimpses we have of the hero's life, it seems very unlikely that he'd know any of the answers.

Kedar: That's his genius. Maybe that's the story of every genius. Did you know Einstein daydreamed about riding a beam of light as a very young boy? Relativity didn't come out of any books he crammed for as a student. All truly original ideas come from little bits of our lives, bits that someone seeing our life like a movie wouldn't waste two seconds on—unless in some later part of the movie it turned out those bits enabled us to answer some questions in a millionaire quiz show or to formulate some world-shaking theory.

Ram: Are you comparing yourself to the slumdog millionaire or to Einstein?

Kedar: Why can't I do both? My life here in India qualifies me to be a slumdog, and my philosophical discoveries qualify me to be an intellectual millionaire, an Einstein.

Ram: I would dispute the Einstein part but first let me just say I live in India and I don't think of myself as a slumdog.

Kedar: You are a richdog philosopher. You live in exceptional accommodations and have loads of money--that's not like most Indians. Most Indians live in the slums.

Ram: I'm not so rich and what I have I budget for my daughter's college in the U.S. and my retirement here. And you're not such a slumdog: you live in a three bedroom flat with a spacious balcony that brings in cool breezes; you have your astrology business and no wife or kids to worry about; hardly a slumdog.

Kedar: It's all relative, cousin.

Ram: Is that why you're so hungry for fame—you want to be as rich as you perceive some of your relatives, specifically me; you want to be a slumdog millionaire instead of a slumdog philosopher?

Kedar: Sure I'd like fame and riches. I'm only human. But I'm not envious. I don't compare myself with my richer cousins—you're all so much older than me. Besides hard times are useful. I wouldn't have made my philosophical discoveries if I had it too good.

Ram: OK, let's talk about your philosophy, the millionaire part as you seem to consider it. Let's see...NSTP theory, UQV theory, Superultramodern science—have I left anything out?

Kedar: No. In fact Superultramodern science encompasses NSTP and UQV so you're a bit redundant. But there are articles under all three headings on the internet so that's OK.

Ram: Why Superultramodern? Doesn't it sound gimmicky?

Kedar: I wanted my work to sound new, and modern and ultramodern were already taken. After my work, now there is an abundance of superultramodern links on the internet.

Ram (sniggering): Any porn?

Kedar: Well you can't control these things you know. The only image I've submitted is a portrait—fully clothed—of me. But maybe by now the image has had more sex than me, which, as I'm a virgin, wouldn't be difficult.

Ram: Are you envious of your image, like Dorian Gray?

Kedar: I live in the best of all possible worlds—there is no room for envy.

Ram: That's like Leibniz.

Kedar: But unlike Leibniz, I maintain that the world is the best of all possible worlds only for the Ultimate Philosopher, in this case a Slumdog Philosopher. For anyone else it's not the best of all possible worlds, no matter how well off they are. Even to me sometimes it seems like a concentration camp, though I know God is only having me jump through hoops so I can answer the Ultimate Question.

Ram: What is the Ultimate Question? (sniggering again) Oh no, have I just asked it?

Kedar (smiling): You've asked the Meta-Ultimate Question. The Ultimate Question asks us to resolve a paradox, call it the God paradox. Let me illustrate. God is uncreated, right?

Ram: That's usually part of the standard definition, along with the three omni's.

Kedar: The three omni's?

Ram: Omniscient, omnipotent and omni-benevolent.

Kedar: Ah yes, the three omni's that give rise to the problem of evil.

Ram: Yes, if God is all powerful, all knowing and all good how can there be evil in the world.

Kedar: I have an answer to that but first let's investigate the nature of God.

Ram: How do you propose we do that?

Kedar: Well you can't investigate other examples of the three omni's simply because there aren't any. But perhaps we can gain purchase on the problem of understanding the nature of God by investigating other uncreated things.

Ram: I see where you're going. It's like investigating the nature of man. We might start by defining him as Socrates initially did, as a featherless biped. Then we would consider and reject other featherless bipeds like plucked chickens and maybe take seriously featherless bipeds like the great apes, eventually concluding man is like the latter. In this way, we could redefine man as a naked ape once we have arrived at his essential nature.

Kedar: Yes, though I would dispense with the usual evolutionary theories, science does proceed at least initially by classification and differentiation.

Thus to shed light on God's true nature, we might ask what other things are uncreated to see if God is at all like them, how he's different from them, etc. But immediately we have a problem. The only other uncreated things I can think of are all mathematical and logical entities like $2+2=4$. The problem is all these things are logically necessary and it seems that they have to be logically necessary. God, unlike $2+2=4$, is logically unnecessary because we can conceive of him not existing. We can't imagine $2+2$ not equaling 4.

So we thought we'd do a little taxonomy on God to understand his true nature but we're left with a riddle that I call the Ultimate Question. How can it be that an uncreated thing like God isn't logically necessary when it seems self-evident that all uncreated things have to be logically necessary.

God has asked me this question because my answer to it will reveal God's true nature and God wants to be discovered. The discovery will quench God's vanity, the reason he created the universe in the first place.

Ram: What will happen then? Will manna rain from the skies?

Kedar: Who knows? Maybe the universe will end.

Ram: Then the universe will end? Waiter, give this man another beer. (Waiter goes). Seriously though, might not God's vanity be better quenched by you not being able to answer the Ultimate Question, by God stumping philosopher after philosopher to the end of time?

Kedar: It's a good question. I think of it like hide and seek. My presupposition is that, like a child, God wants to be found, that his vanity would be better quenched by me answering the Ultimate Question rather than indefinitely remaining a mystery.

Ram: OK. Let's assume God wants to be found. Might he not want to be found by a host of people?

Kedar: Which host? Some Heavenly Host?

Ram: I mean is God's vanity quenchable by just an Ultimate Philosopher? Might he not create an Ultimate Playwright, Ultimate Actors and Ultimate Set-Designers to satisfy his vanity (sometimes it's fun to imagine we're in a play)?

Kedar: Each being he creates would have to live in a world ideally made for answering the Ultimate Question. Such a world would be evil for all except the Ultimate Philosopher. So he has created only the Ultimate Philosopher or possibly several Ultimate Philosophers (holds his hand out to gesture to Ram). Any more people and he could be accused of being evil and that wouldn't gratify his vanity. Incidentally my semi-solipsism also solves the problem of evil: the only evil God permits in this world is necessary for the Ultimate Philosopher—possibly several Ultimate Philosophers—to discover his true nature.

Ram: So let me get this: are you saying that if I'm not an Ultimate Philosopher, whatever that is, I don't exist?

Kedar: That's right. According to UQV, there is only the Ultimate Questioner with his Vanity and the Ultimate Philosopher who can gratify that vanity by answering the Ultimate Question. That's why I've used the phrase, semi-solipsism. Everything else (opens his arms wide), including the appearance of evil, is an illusion, everyone else, an automaton, a zombie.

Ram: And NSTP theory?

Kedar: According to NSTP, the universe is a Non-Spatial-Thinking Process, a computer, if you will, that has non-spatial feelings as 'hardware' and thoughts and ideas as 'software'. For example, the idea of space is software, making space a virtual reality.

Ram: Reminds me of a poem I once wrote:

Does a man in a dream think and see

Is he real to himself as I am to me.

There is more to the poem but that's all that's relevant now.

Do your "zombies" think and see? Are they real to themselves as you are to you?

Kedar: No. They only *seem* to think and see to me, the Ultimate Philosopher. If they could actually think and see, they wouldn't be zombies. I don't say they are zombies because they don't have souls—I don't believe in souls.

Ram: Could it be that you are a zombie and the Ultimate Philosopher is someone else—like maybe me, or the waiter? My Intro to Philosophy professor once told me a story that I'll modify here. Oh waiter, could you come here. Would you like to hear a story? (The waiter, standing with his back to the audience so Ram seems to address both him and the audience, goes from listening casually to shifting about and looking visibly uncomfortable):

You are not where you think you are. In fact, you don't even have a body. The truth is you were kidnapped at a young age by a scientist who's testing your reactions to different scenarios by feeding your brain, which is really in a vat of nutrients instead of inside your skull, the appropriate nerve stimulations. You may reach up and feel your skull but that sensation, like all the sights and sounds you sense is just the computer feeding you the appropriate nerve stimulations. That's why the world has been so weird lately. The attacks on the World Trade Center and Mumbai, the current recession that no one really seems to understand, all fed to your brain via the scientist's computer. But now the scientist has decided to bring you out of the vat but realizes this may be too disturbing. So, to gradually introduce you to the idea, the computer feeds you images of two guys named Ram and Kedar (gestures to himself and Kedar) who've been discussing something philosophical you've only partially been paying attention to. Just now they are telling you the brain-in-vat theory. Any minute now, once your brain has accepted this as a possibility, the false reality will melt away and you'll wake up in the scientist's lab.

Waiter (tentatively): Do you need another beer?

Ram: No thanks. You can go now. Just as in the story, we were zombies telling the waiter the brain-in-vat theory, we could in reality be zombies explaining superultramodern science to the waiter who's the real Ultimate Philosopher.

Kedar: Well anything is possible but I think I'm the Ultimate Philosopher because I thought up the UQV. That may sound like vanity but really what I'm saying is that the Ultimate Question has been posed to me. That makes me the Ultimate Philosopher.

Ram: But we just saw how the Ultimate Question could've been posed to the Ultimate Waiter. Zombies Kedar and Ram could be introduced by God to pose the question to him. If the waiter resolves before you the God paradox, he would be the Ultimate Philosopher, right?

Kedar: Leaving aside for the moment my innate feeling that I'm not a zombie, the waiter could be a zombie who tells me the answer—because God's chosen that method of having me answer the Ultimate Question. He could tell me the

answer but only I, by turning it over in my mind and fully appreciating it, gratify God's vanity, making me the Ultimate Philosopher.

Ram: So the Ultimate Philosopher is not necessarily the one who the Ultimate Question is posed to or even the one who discovers the Ultimate Answer. Those things are incidental. What's essential is that he most appreciates the answer, thereby gratifying God's vanity.

Kedar: Could you elaborate?

Ram: It's like The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Some superultramodern civilization in a galaxy far, far away builds a computer called Deep Thought to answer the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe and Everything. After a few million years the computer comes back with the answer 42. When the designers of the computer (or rather their descendents) are outraged, the computer says that 42 is indeed the answer—the problem is they hadn't fully understood the question.

The Ultimate Philosopher is not the alien who comes up with the question nor the computer that comes up with the answer but rather the human who muses, 'Ah...42!'

Kedar: You know I could muse, 'Ah...42!' $4+2$ is 6, which is lucky for me. 8 is unlucky.

Ram: It's interesting 6 is lucky for you. Did you know 6 is a perfect number?

Kedar: How do you mean?

Ram: It's perfect because the sum of its divisors less than itself equals itself: 1, 2 and 3 are all the divisors of 6 less than itself and they sum to 6.

Kedar: Are there other, what did you call them, perfect numbers?

Ram: In fact, it can be proved that every number expressible as (writes on a napkin) $2^{p-1} \times (2^p - 1)$, where p is prime, is perfect. 6 results when p is 2, 28, the next perfect number results when p is 3, and so on.

The interesting thing is they haven't found an odd perfect number yet though they've used supercomputers to search through the first zillion numbers.

Kedar: Isn't 1 an odd perfect number? The sum of its divisors is 1.

Ram: You know, I thought that too though it can't be a perfect number as it's usually defined: 1's divisors *less than itself* sum to zero since there are none.

Kedar: The 'less than itself' condition seems a bit artificial anyway. 1 seems all the more special for failing in this way.

Ram: I agree, though without the 'less than itself' condition to exclude the number in question, 1 is trivially the only perfect number. Interesting how more than one human can muse 'Ah...42!' In fact I thought of 1 as the number of God for that reason, just as someone once told me 6 is the number of Christ and we all know 666 according to the Bible is the number of the antichrist...(Ram trails off lost in thought).

Kedar(laughing): The Bible—I'm probably more Moslem than Christian or Hindu.

Ram: Hmm...what did you say? I was just thinking 1 is interesting in another way.

Kedar: How so?

Ram: On the dollar bill it says, "E Pluribus Unum" which means 'Out of the many, One'. One is special. It not only counts individuals as do all the natural numbers, but it also can be used to assert their membership in a class, a unity which can include many things, perhaps everything.

Kedar: Interesting. Go on.

Ram: One in the second sense—the sum totality of everything—has to exist even if there is nothing. Even if nothing exists, the sum totality of everything—the null set—exists.

Kedar: So you've shown that the sum totality of everything must exist, even if nothing exists. For me this is like $2+2=4$: uncreated but necessary. My conception of God is that he is uncreated and unnecessary.

Ram: True. Now why do you say God is unnecessary?

Kedar: It just seems to be a self-evident truth that for any materially existent being, it's possible to imagine its non-existence—St. Anselm notwithstanding.

Ram: OK. I think I buy that. Why do you say he is uncreated? I take it you mean he exists and is uncreated.

Kedar: It's essentially an argument from design. The world exhibits too much order for it not to have been created. And if created, it must've been created by a first creator with greater perfection than the creation. This is because there is always greater perfection in the cause than the effect.

Ram: Another self-evident truth?

Kedar: Yep. Do you buy it?

Ram: I don't think so. First I think it's better to speak of caused and uncaused things rather than created and uncreated because created is ambiguous. In certain contexts created implies a creator-being in others not necessarily. With regard to God, I think you want to make the stronger claim that he's uncaused, not merely that he's uncreated. At any rate, for now I'll stick with your terminology.

Now about your 'self-evident truth'...it runs counter to evolution. Mutation and natural selection give rise to organisms more perfectly adapted to their environment. But it makes no sense to say that mutation and natural selection are more perfect than the organisms they produce. The cause need not be more perfect than the effect.

Kedar: Well I am a creationist. To put it another way, the world exhibits too much order for it to have come about from natural selection, the big-bang or whatever is science's latest candidate for replacing an Intelligent-Design explanation.

Ram: What about the idea that there are many possible worlds and we notice order precisely because order is necessary to have created us? This is the anthropic-principle.

Kedar: The big-bang theory, many worlds, anthropic-principle all have a problem about what gave rise to the beginning. Such theories by postulating a beginning leave room for a creationistic explanation rather than being an objection to it.

And the view that the universe is composed solely of thoughts and ideas is a more natural domain for creationism. More crudely, it's much easier for God to have created the universe from his own thoughts and ideas than matter.

Thus idealism and creationism are mutually supportive.

Ram: OK. Let's say I buy all this to see where it leads.

Kedar: Where it leads is straightforward: if you accept that there is more perfection in the creator than in the creation, the only way to escape an infinite regress of created beings of ever greater perfection is to postulate an uncreated first creator perfect enough to have created the order we see in the universe.

Ram: I am lost. Now that I see how God can be an uncreated, unnecessary being, I don't see the paradox anymore.

Kedar: The paradox results because it seems self-evident—at least to me—that all uncreated things are necessary. But if you need convincing, remember $2+2=4$. Uncreated but necessary right? God's unlike all those truths of mathematics and logic; he is uncreated and unnecessary, the only such entity. This demands explanation—that's the Ultimate Question, the question about God's true nature.

Ram: How about matter and space-time? Aren't these uncreated according to physics and unnecessary in the sense that we could imagine them not existing? For example, there could be nothing, the null set.

Kedar: Space-time isn't uncreated according to modern physics—it arose at the moment of the big bang.

Ram: How about matter then?

Kedar: That's where NSTP comes in. According to it, the universe is a Non Spatial Thinking Process...like a computer. Matter, space-time and such are illusions.

Ram: Now hold on. NSTP theory seems to cut the ground from under your own feet also. How can you appeal to order in the universe to argue for Intelligent-Design if the order itself is an illusion?

Kedar: I don't say the order is an illusion—just that the standard materialistic explanations of it are misleading.

Ram: OK. Let's hear the arguments for NSTP theory.

Kedar: The best one is quantum non-locality. As in Einstein's paper (with Podolsky and Rosen), you take two correlated particles with opposite spins and allow them to separate to distances so great that there can be no causal links between them. You then change the spin of one. Quantum mechanics tells you the other one's spin will instantaneously change also because they are correlated though there is by hypothesis no causal link between them. Quantum mechanics has no explanation for this—I do.

Ram: And the explanation is?

Kedar: Essentially it's NSTP's idealism. In reality, there are no particles or space or motion, only ideas and feelings. Of course you could retain particles, space and motion and deny quantum non-locality as NSTP allows. That's why I call it semi-idealistic.

Ram: Yeah, quantum mechanics has predictive power but struggles with explanation. For example, the wave/particle dualism at the heart of the Schrodinger's cat paradox is one with which I've tried to rouse my brother Max, the physics PhD, but like most modern day physicists, he's strictly pragmatic, measuring the theory by its predictions alone, its "cash value" as pragmatists say. In his defense, I should say your theory proposes an explanation but has no predictive power. I prefer to hold on to the predictive power because someday quantum mechanics may find an explanation but I don't see how your theory will ever have predictive power.

Kedar: You know why pragmatists say "cash value"? A theory is like an insurance policy, of limited value if it pays off only after you're dead...unless it also has "cash value" for the living. NSTP theory has predictive power in its own domain. It allows for the possibility that we could affect our experiences by reprogramming the non-spatial universal computer—creating a beautiful girlfriend for ourselves, for example.

Ram: Unfortunately—uh for several reasons—, this sort of technology isn't here at present so your theory can't be tested at this time.

Kedar: That's true of some interpretations of quantum mechanics as well as string theory and they are taken seriously.

Ram: True. Anyway, let's talk a little bit more about your semi-solipsism. I think more of my poem is relevant. It goes:

Does a man in a dream think and see?

Is he real to himself as I am to me?

Far from home, I've forgotten;

Far from home where we were one.

Why do I wonder when I know?

Why do the questions continue to flow?

Let them come, from me they stem;

Let them come, joy to answer them.

It seems a bit like UQV theory. I wrote it when I was in high school—that is, before you were born.

Kedar: Interesting poem. Two ways in which it's different from UQV is 1. It asserts, like Hinduism, that there was a time when God and you were one—UQV maintains that God and the Ultimate Philosopher are always distinct (if I were God, I would create Aishwarya Rai here and have sex with her); and 2. The poem claims that the questions come from yourself whereas UQV maintains that it is God who poses the Ultimate Question. Still an interesting poem.

Ram: Maybe you are God. When you created the world—that is, first set it into motion—you could've thought that immediate and constant sensual gratification wouldn't be as good as a gradual foreplay-like buildup, that it would be better to earn sex with Aishwarya by intellectual accomplishment, after you besting me at this dialog for example.

Kedar: Besting you at this dialog? Does that mean I've convinced you you're a zombie? It's a bit amusing really: if you aren't a zombie, UQV is false; but if you are a zombie, there is no point convincing you UQV is true. Either way, what I'm doing seems a bit pointless, that is unless it gratifies God's vanity.

Ram: No you haven't convinced me. In fact, there is something about the matter and space-time examples that I want to bring out.

Kedar: What's that?

Ram: If you grant for a moment that matter, space and time are uncreated but unnecessary, let's investigate why this doesn't seem paradoxical to modern-day physicists. Or forget modern-day physicists, it doesn't even seem paradoxical to me though I seem to share with you a much lower paradox-threshold than modern-day physicists.

Kedar: Remember: space-time is not uncreated according to current physics.

Ram: I don't really need it to be uncreated; it should only be plausible that it's uncreated...as it seemed to be when physics was Newtonian. If it's plausible that space and time are uncreated and unnecessary then God's being uncreated and unnecessary wouldn't seem like such a paradox, right? And it is plausible isn't it? Newton was no slouch and he thought space and time were uncreated and unnecessary. Still if you object to the example, we have matter and I can think of

another one from modern physics: the wave-function of the universe, which is also uncreated and unnecessary.

These examples don't seem paradoxical because you're dealing with two different theories in two very different fields. Physics tells you matter, the wave-function of the universe, space and time—if you're a Newtonian—are uncreated—logic or maybe introspection tells you they are unnecessary. You can't necessarily expect a physical fact, which has empirical content to behave like a truth of logic. Similarly God's being uncreated is a fact—if you buy it—of UQV theory or Intelligent Design theory. You can't expect it to behave like a truth of logic and be logically necessary. So God can be uncreated according to UQV theory and unnecessary according to logic or introspection. There is no paradox because 'uncreated things must be logically necessary' is a misleading assumption, motivated by considering only logical and mathematical truths not entities from empirical disciplines. Because these entities are empirical they are not logically necessary but because they are so fundamental to their respective disciplines, they are uncreated.

Kedar: I guess, 'uncreated things must be logically necessary' seems like a self-evident truth to me. A person of average intelligence may not agree with it.

Ram: I don't think you want to say Newton was a person of average intelligence...

Kedar: Well I've written a letter to Stephen Hawking pointing out what I thought were his mistakes—I would've done the same for Newton.

Also I have an objection to your argument that the physical and logical domains are distinct. It goes something like this: it doesn't matter whether you call it physical or logical or chemical. It's ultimately about sense, meaning and understanding. And that is actually how I perceive the definition of logic to be.

Ram: I'm not sure I understand what you said, but I'll try. Maybe you now intend to broaden your sense of what is necessary to include physical and chemical entities like the ones I mentioned, including them in a broader definition of necessity. But then God could be necessary in that sense. Your Intelligent Design argument for why God is uncreated is also an argument for his existence. If the argument is valid, then he is necessary in the domain of UQV theory just as matter and the wave-function of the universe are necessary in physics. But then again you have no paradox: God is uncreated and necessary.

Is the Ultimate Question answered?

(Deccan Dugout goes dark.)

Is the universe ending?

Kedar: I'm sure it's a power failure. Let's ask the waiter how long we have to wait before the backup generator kicks in.

Ram: Hold on, I have an idea: if the universe went dark because we answered the Ultimate Question, then maybe we're Gods now and can turn on the lights ourselves.

Kedar: How do you mean?

Ram: Just as you say a creator is at least as great as the creation, maybe to understand something fully you have to be at least as great as what you understand. So if by answering the Ultimate Question, we have fully understood God, then we should be as great as God and turning on the lights should be no problem. Here, (gets up, chuckling) Let There Be Light!

(Deccan Dugout remains dark.)

I don't think we've fully understood God.

Kedar: God is a philosophical black hole.

(The lights come back on.)

Oh now I remember what I wanted to say. I reject as absurd the notion of physically necessary or chemically necessary or what have you. And to say God is necessary because he is necessary in the domain of UQV theory is a bit like saying gravity is necessary because it is necessary in the domain of Newton's law of gravity—it's a tautology. So in short, by 'necessary' I definitely mean only logically necessary. The paradox still obtains in spite of your examples because matter, the wave-function of the universe and such things are created on my view and unnecessary as we both agree. God remains the only uncreated and unnecessary thing, which generates the paradox.

Ram: I think I differ from you in allowing a sense of 'necessary' which is weaker than logical necessity. The weaker sense is: something is physically necessary if there's some feature of the universe that makes it always be the case; like I believe gravity obtains is true necessarily because there is some feature of the universe that makes objects always be drawn to each other.

Kedar: But I reject that there are such features of the universe. That objects are drawn to each other is only probabilistically likely.

Ram: Even if we admit that laws of nature are only probabilistically likely, the laws governing how probable the events in question are, are a necessary feature of the universe. I.e. it is a necessary feature of the universe that objects are drawn to each other say 99.99...% of the time, just as it is a necessary feature (pulls a coin out of his pocket) of this coin that it comes up heads 50% of the time. Similarly if UQV's Intelligent Design argument is valid, God's existence may be a physically necessary feature of the universe, just as laws of nature, however probabilistic they may be, are a necessary feature of the universe. In fact I would say that laws of nature are also uncreated like your God. And they are also logically unnecessary because we can conceive that they don't obtain.

So we have more things that are uncreated and unnecessary—doesn't the sheer weight of them begin to make your God less paradoxical?

Kedar: I would say laws of nature are no different from your matter and wave-function of the universe examples. All are created unlike God. God is uncreated and yet, unlike other uncreated things—for example $2+2=4$ —God is somehow logically unnecessary, so the paradox still remains.

Ram: Interesting. I can see why you'd think laws of nature and the wave-function of the universe are created. Though they may be unknown to us, you see them all as exhibiting great order. And on your view anything that exhibits order like the universe as a whole must've been created. But what about matter? It's not so ordered. We witness it changing but it always comes from other matter. Its form may change but matter is neither created nor destroyed. So matter is uncreated but because we can conceive it not existing, it's also unnecessary...like your God. Doesn't something as 'lumpy' as matter also being uncreated and unnecessary detract from the majesty of your God?

Kedar: The difference between God and matter is we can conceive matter being created. But God we can't imagine being created because he is by definition the ultimate creator.

Besides, matter may seem lumpy now, but as particle physics delves deeper into its structure, it too will seem too ordered not to have been created.

Ram: Hmm, we seem to be at an impasse where I keep on suggesting things I consider uncreated and logically unnecessary but you keep on insisting they are created.

Kedar: I don't insist they're created. I only point out that it's conceivable they're created, unlike God whom we can't conceive was created.

Ram: Oh really. Let's switch gears a bit and consider your argument that intelligibility presupposes order, which presupposes a creator. If God is intelligible as UQV theory requires, might not he too have a creator—perhaps man?

Kedar: But man is inferior to God. Are you rejecting my principle that there is more perfection in the creator than the created?

Ram: Well I never believed it. Earlier I used evolution to give an example of how it made no sense to say a cause was more perfect than the effect. In Artificial Intelligence, we have examples of creations sometimes exceeding their creators. There are machine math theorem generators for example, and just yesterday, I read about a robot that devises chemistry experiments and has made its own new discoveries. Maybe God is a program to make sense of it all we started with version 1.0 back when we were cavemen. At some version, the program will come on line—maybe it has already—and enable us to truly understand everything and then we may find it hard to believe that the program was created by us. We may say it mysteriously became 'conscious'—whatever that means—when, in designing it, we should've come to know what even our own consciousness consisted of.

Or in another domain, using an algebraic analogy due to my mother, in the beginning we said, let God be x . Right now, we're still in the process of setting down the equations x must satisfy. But once we've done it to our satisfaction, we'll be in a position to solve for x . The solution, like the result of a computer program may surprise us and the surprise might start us believing in Holy Ghosts in the machine when it was us all along.

Kedar: Hmm...is 'I' or mind an abstraction on your view? I would agree with you in the case of the mind of man or machine for that matter. 'I' in the case of man is an abstraction, a bundle of sensations, thoughts and ideas. But God isn't an abstraction; he's real.

Besides neither man nor machine can be God. God is perfect by definition. We're not.

Ram: Interesting you should say that God is perfect by definition. I one time developed for a philosophy class the argument that the perfect being by definition *cannot* exist. He cannot exist because he can have no new thoughts. This is because having the thoughts either makes him better or makes him worse.

If it makes him better he couldn't have been perfect to begin with; if it makes him worse, he would've had the potential for imperfect thoughts so again he couldn't have been perfect. Either way, if he's perfect, he can't have any new thoughts and so can't exist in a sense we conceive intelligent life existing.

In fact God can't change in anyway for the same reason. That's why theologians generally regard him as beyond time. But that's just another paradox, the paradox of perfection.

Kedar: As I said, God is a philosophical black hole.

Ram: You know, I don't accept that. God *is* perfection, maybe not the kind that doesn't allow for change but the kind that exhibits perfect order, perfect intelligibility. So far from being a black hole, my God exhibits perfect intelligibility, certainly free from any paradoxes.

The world on the other hand at its core doesn't exhibit perfect order: relativity, quantum mechanics, subatomic particles—all seem too messy to have been the work of some preexisting Intelligent Designer.

Maybe it's we that bring order to the universe; something capable of being ordered may exist independently of us but it's we that by our representations do the ordering. At present we're still somewhat chaotic ourselves, but that's OK: we're ordering ourselves too in the process of ordering the universe. As time goes on we may increasingly come to resemble our creation, the well-ordered computer, as we design it to resemble us. And God? Far from being uncreated as you say, as the most intelligible thing there is, he is the most created, the pinnacle of creation, maybe some Ultimate Thinking Machine of the future, Deep Thought if you will, the last stage of evolution. Or maybe man will continue to evolve toward greater perfection aided by his creation, the computer. Man and machine tend toward each other as they approach Godhood. Hmm...I like that. What do you think?

Kedar: I was just thinking you better watch the beers—I think you're starting to wax philosophical. But seriously, I don't know if you realize this but God being the Ultimate Computer solves your paradox about the perfect being not existing also.

Ram: How?

Kedar: Imagine a computer working on a problem. It changes as it goes through its algorithm, but its algorithm, its program if you will, is fixed, existing in the same condition even as it executes and the computer goes through the steps

toward solving the problem. The program is perfect if it most efficiently solves the problem it was created to solve. The computer that executes it can also be perfect if it executes the program without any glitches. Yet the computer undeniably goes through steps as it gets 'better' in the sense of getting closer to the solution. So the perfect being can change, can exist.

Ram: I hadn't thought of that. I think that solves my paradox of perfection.

(silence as Ram ponders Kedar's solution to the paradox of perfection)

Ram: You know, now you've solved my paradox, I'd like to take another crack at solving yours—may I?

Kedar: Please.

Ram: This is related to the physical and logical domains being distinct argument I made earlier...so I am not sure you'll buy it.

Kedar: I'm all ears.

Ram: The solution doesn't dismiss the paradox rather it explains how it's generated. The God paradox asks us how can it be that an uncreated thing, like God, is unnecessary.

I think the solution is to realize that other uncreated things like the sentence $2+2=4$ are fundamentally different from God. All other uncreated things are truths dependent only on the meanings of concepts involved and as such they are necessarily true. They would be true if nothing existed. The sentence 'God exists' if true is not a truth dependent purely on the meaning of the concepts involved; it makes an explicit existence claim and like all existence claims is not necessarily true.

Kedar: How about a sentence like 'the number two exists' or 'triangles exist'? Don't these make existence claims and are uncreated and necessary? If they are, there is a whole class of platonic entities from mathematics and logic that exist but are uncreated and necessary. So aren't we again left wondering how come God is uncreated yet unnecessary?

Ram: I don't think so. You could accept that numbers and triangles and such exist necessarily. For example, you could accept the argument that 2 must exist necessarily for the sentence 'There is an even number between 1 and 3' to be necessarily true. Still this 2 exists in a very different way than God is claimed to exist. The number 2, like other platonic entities, would exist even if there were nothing in the world. God can only exist if God exists in the actual world. So

even if it could be meaningfully said that the number 2 exists, that statement is necessarily true purely due to the meaning of the concepts involved and possibly some ancillary concepts. 'God exists' on the other hand is not a conceptual truth and therefore it shouldn't be surprising that it's not necessarily true.

Note: this solution doesn't "detract from the majesty of God". God is still unique in being the only uncreated, unnecessary entity. In fact I would say he's the only uncreated entity. That he is unnecessary is a bit redundant since he is an entity. What I've tried to do is explain the paradox.

The paradox asks us what it is about the nature of God that makes him uncreated and unnecessary. Maybe the answer is as simple as this: it's his nature as the first creator that accounts for his being uncreated and unnecessary: because he's the first, he is uncreated and because he is a creator, i.e. a being, a thing, rather than a truth dependent on the meaning of concepts involved, he's unnecessary.

At any rate, that's it. Sorry if I've defused your paradox.

Kedar: You needn't apologize. I don't think what you said defuses the paradox. If I may elaborate...

Ram: Go on.

Kedar: To make the best sense of the order I see in the universe—and by order I include astrology, philosophy and UQV theory as well—I conjecture and believe that there is a thing so strange that it is both "first" and "a thing". This seems strange to me because I fail to understand how a thing can be the first – i.e. uncreated; since it is self-evident to me that any "thing" must have a creator. Thus, it is simple to understand that God is uncreated, since he is defined as the first creator. And it may be equally simple to understand that he is unnecessary, since he, being a creator, is a thing. However, this simplicity does not answer the paradox, for there is still the failure to understand how an unnecessary thing can be uncreated.

Ram: I can agree to that. The paradox isn't entirely solved.

What is solved is the riddle of how an uncreated thing can be unnecessary. It's solved because if we look at uncreated things like $2+2=4$ or even 2, and wonder why God among them isn't necessary, we have an answer: unlike other uncreated things God's existence if true is not a truth derived from the meanings of underlying concepts so we shouldn't expect it to be necessary.

What isn't solved is the riddle of how God can be uncreated, since it seems self-evident to you that all 'things' are created. Sure, you may say, we have an

argument for why God is uncreated but it's almost like in the case of this chair, if we want to know why it floats, it's not enough to say everything has weight and some things are bound to be lighter than water—we must be able to point to the fact that it's made of wood. Similarly if we want to know why God is uncreated, it's not enough to say he's the first creator—we must at least be able to conceive how there could be some feature of him that could make him so. And this we are unable to do. God's being uncreated remains a paradox.

But I submit to you that if we have to swallow that one unnecessary thing is unaccountably uncreated, namely God, why don't we just swallow that the universe is uncreated and dispense with God?

Kedar: Because I submit to you that the God hypothesis posits only one unnecessary, uncreated entity but positing that the universe is uncreated is positing countless well-ordered entities that are unnecessary and uncreated and this is intellectually unsatisfying.

Ram: You may be right but the universe also offers countless avenues of promising research: just because each thing is uncreated doesn't mean it's uncaused and we can investigate the causes right up to but not including the first cause, the moment before the big bang. Your God is and I think always will be as you say, "a philosophical black hole". What kind of positing you prefer—a paradoxical God or an uncreated origin to the universe—depends I think ultimately on your temperament than any reasoned argument.

(silence as both ponder the impasse).

...Hey, listen, I'd like to return to your solution to my paradox of perfection.

Kedar: Yes?

Ram: If a perfect computer program can exist and still have steps in its execution making any computer that perfectly executes it, capable of changing, I wonder what problem the Most Perfect Program would be solving.

Kedar: I would say it would be solving the God Paradox. But I think you'd disagree.

Ram: Yeah, for me the perfect program would be solving the problem of making sense of it all, of bringing order to the universe. In fact, I may be waxing philosophical again but it seems that through us, the universe could itself be the perfect program that will comprehend or understand all the things that make it up...like 6 is the perfect number that comprehends or is the sum of all the factors that make *it* up. And just like you don't include 6 as one of the factors, the

program may understand each part but never the reason for the whole, the sum totality of everything.

Kedar: Amusing how you bring it back to perfect numbers.

Ram: And doesn't the program for making sense of it all, or of as much as it's possible to make sense of, exist timelessly even before it's coded or even conceived? It exists for all time as the solution to the Ultimate Problem—the problem of making sense of the intelligible universe. It exists for all time like 4 exists for all time as the solution to $2+2$. And such a program instantiated in a computer would no doubt be conscious because it would make sense of it all, it would understand. Wouldn't we call such a program God? Then God, so defined, exists, is uncreated and is necessary—though he might not exist as a conscious being until the program is instantiated in a being.

Kedar: Why is he uncreated and necessary again?

Ram: The solution to making sense of as much of the universe as is possible must exist for all time even if it hasn't been discovered yet. It is a physically necessary feature of the intelligible part of the universe that it can be made sense of in that way. And the 'as much as possible' wording makes it necessary that some such solution exists, kind of like the sum totality of everything that exists necessarily exists.

Kedar: But what if such a program has no special place for us...as it would be if for instance we just didn't have the capacity to ever create it. Will we still call it God?

Ram: Maybe our humility, our capacity to view it as sacred in spite of its not reserving any special place for us itself makes us special, as perfect as we can be.

Waiter: Uh...we're closing now.

(Ram and Kedar start to leave)

Ram: I was wrong. The waiter is not the Ultimate Philosopher. He's the Ultimate Questioner: He decides when our philosophizing—Ultimate or otherwise—has come to an end.

(They both laugh as they head out the door)